

DOE Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) 2023 Project Peer Review

FCIC Task 6 – High Temperature Conversion

April 6, 2023

Feedstock-Conversion Interface Consortium (FCIC)

Presenter: Jim Parks (Oak Ridge National Laboratory)



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Our Team



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Sub-Task 6.13. Experimental Validation of Hierarchical Models



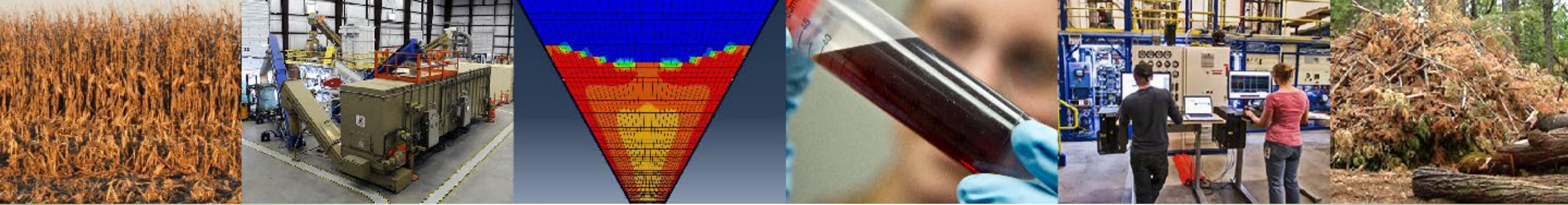
Reinhard Seiser
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Peter Ciesielski
(NREL)



We gratefully acknowledge former team contributors: Gavin Wiggins, Danny Carpenter, Brennan Pecha, Bill Rogers



Project Overview



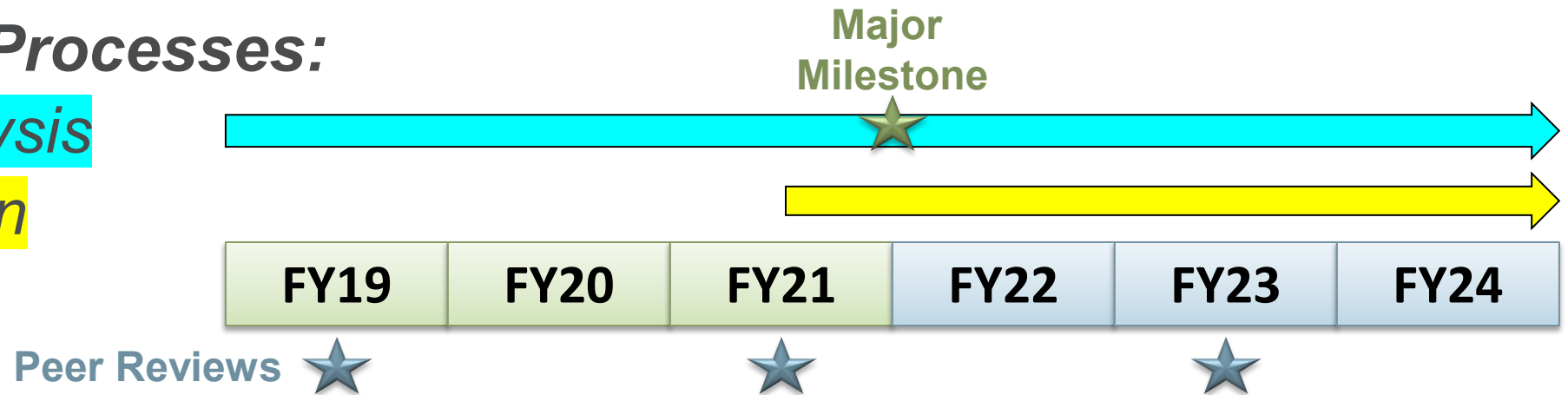
Project Overview: High Temperature Conversion

- **Objective:** Provide a fundamental science-based understanding of the high-temperature conversion of low-cost, complex mixtures of biomass and waste feedstocks for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and related co-products

- **Conversion Processes:**

- Fast Pyrolysis

- Gasification



- **Targeted Outcomes:** Knowledge and tools to enable low-cost feedstocks utilization, increased process reliability, and optimized reactor design to achieve BETO 2030 and 2050 Performance Goals



FCIC Task Organization

Feedstock Preprocessing Conversion

Task 2: Feedstock Variability

Task 5: Preprocessing

Task 6: High-Temperature Conversion

Task 1: Materials of Construction

Task 7: Low-Temperature Conversion

Task 3: Materials Handling

Enabling Tasks

Task X: Project Management

Task 4: Data Integration

**Task 8: TEA/LCA
Task 9: FMEA**

Task X: Project Management: Provide scientific leadership and organizational project management

Task 1: Materials of Construction: Specify materials that do not wear, or break at unacceptable rates

Task 2: Feedstock Variability: Quantify & understand the sources of biomass resource and feedstock variability

Task 3: Materials Handling: Develop tools that enable continuous, steady, trouble free feed into reactors

Task 4: Data Integration: Ensure the data generated in the FCIC are curated and stored – FAIR guidelines

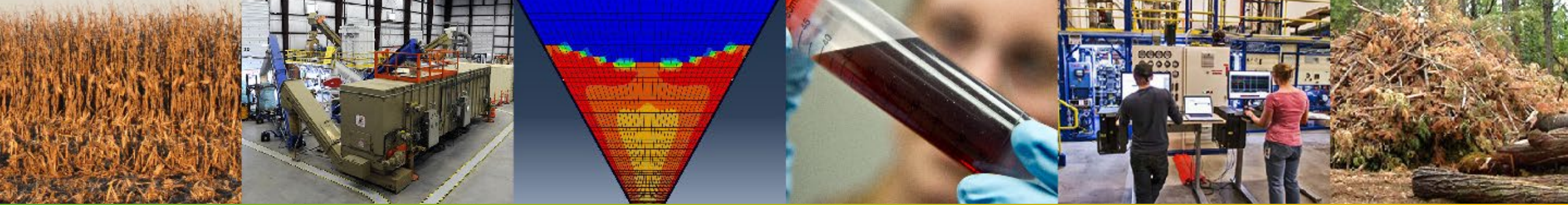
Task 5: Preprocessing: Enable well-defined and homogeneous feedstock from variable biomass resources

Task 6 & 7: Conversion (High- & Low-Temp Pathways): Produce intermediates for further processing

Task 8: Crosscutting Analyses TEA/LCA: Valuation of intermediate streams & quantify variability impact

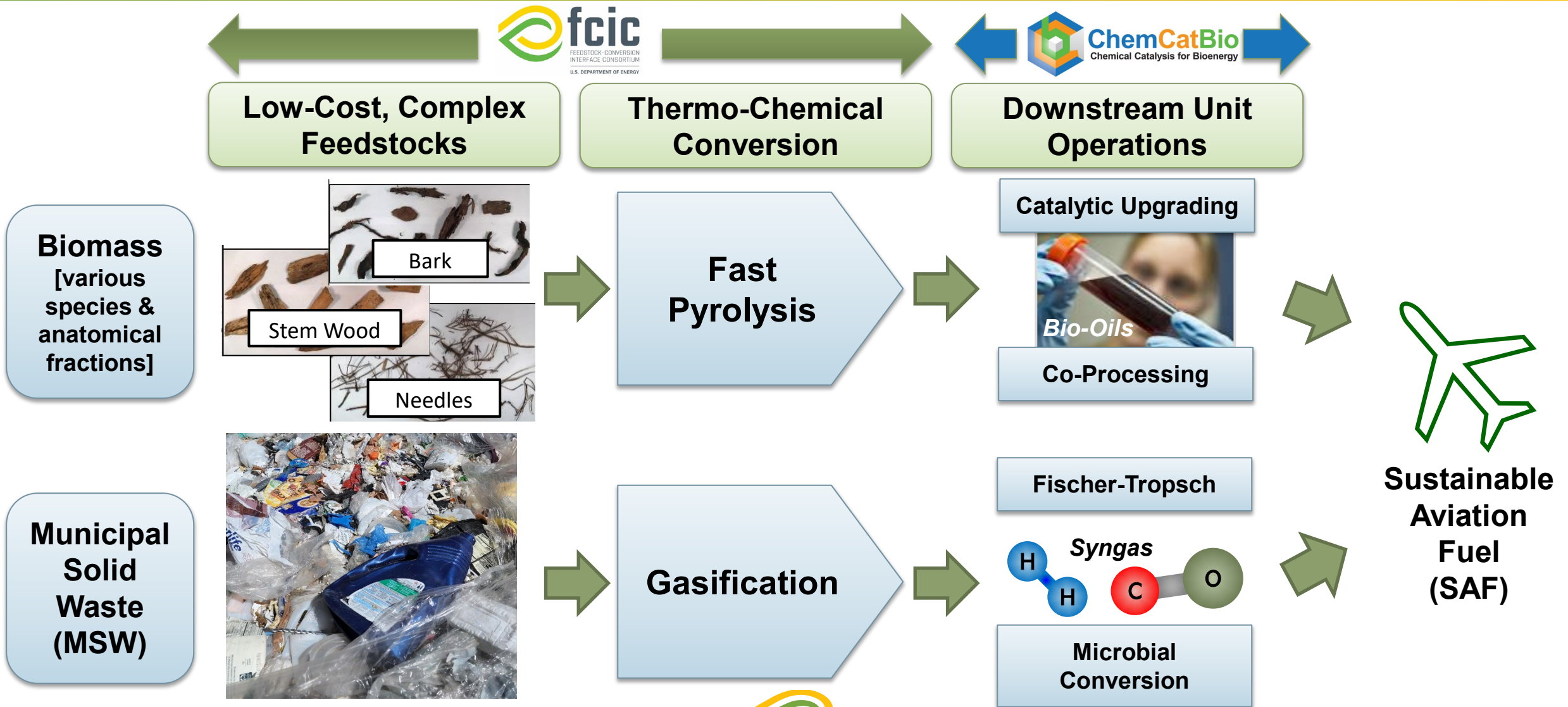
Task 9: Failure Mode & Effects Analysis (FMEA): Standardized approach for assessing attribute criticality





1 – Approach

Thermo-Chemical Conversion to Sustainable Aviation Fuel



Technical Approaches to Achieve Impact

Technical Approaches

Quality by Design (QbD)

Multi-Scale Model-Experiment Coupling

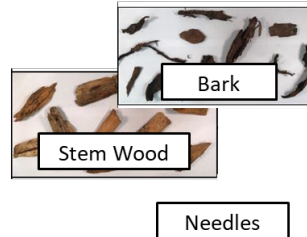
Industry Input-Output

Low-Cost, Complex Feedstocks

Thermo-Chemical Conversion

Downstream Unit Operations

Biomass
[various species & anatomical fractions]



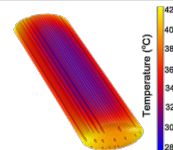
Fast Pyrolysis

Catalytic Upgrading
Bio-Oils
Co-Processing

Critical Material Attributes (CMAs)

Process

Critical Quality Attributes (CQAs)



Meso Scale
[Feedstock Particles]

Science-to-Application

Reactor Scale



Industry Interviews on Needs & Challenges

Impact

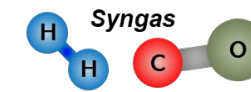
Tech Transfer of Outcomes to Bioenergy Industry

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)



Gasification

Fischer-Tropsch



Microbial Conversion

Task Structure

Sub-Task 6.10.
Liquid Intermediate CQAs

Sub-Task 6.11.
High Throughput Conversion Screening

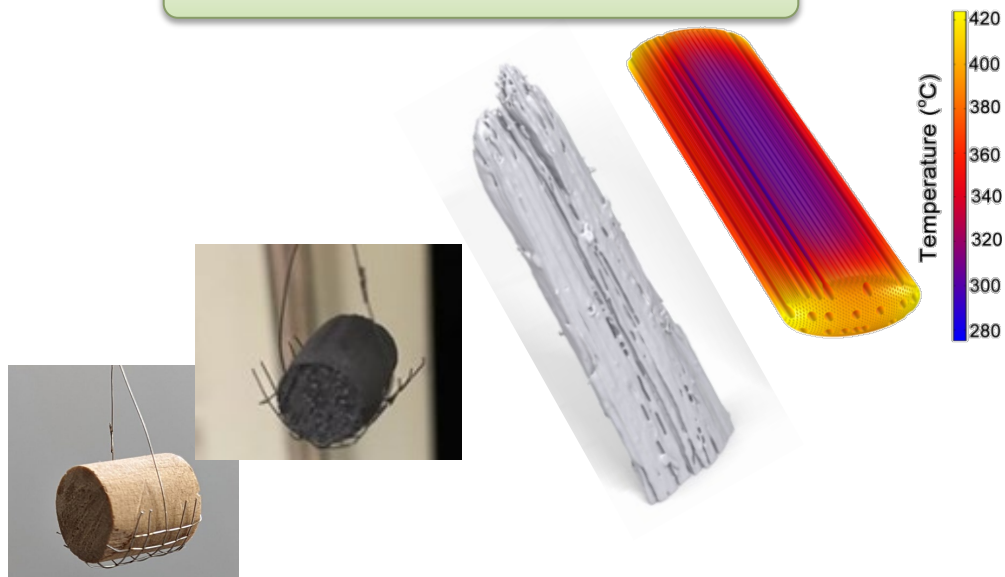
Sub-Task 6.12.
Hierarchical Conversion Modeling Development

Sub-Task 6.13.
Experimental Validation of Hierarchical Models

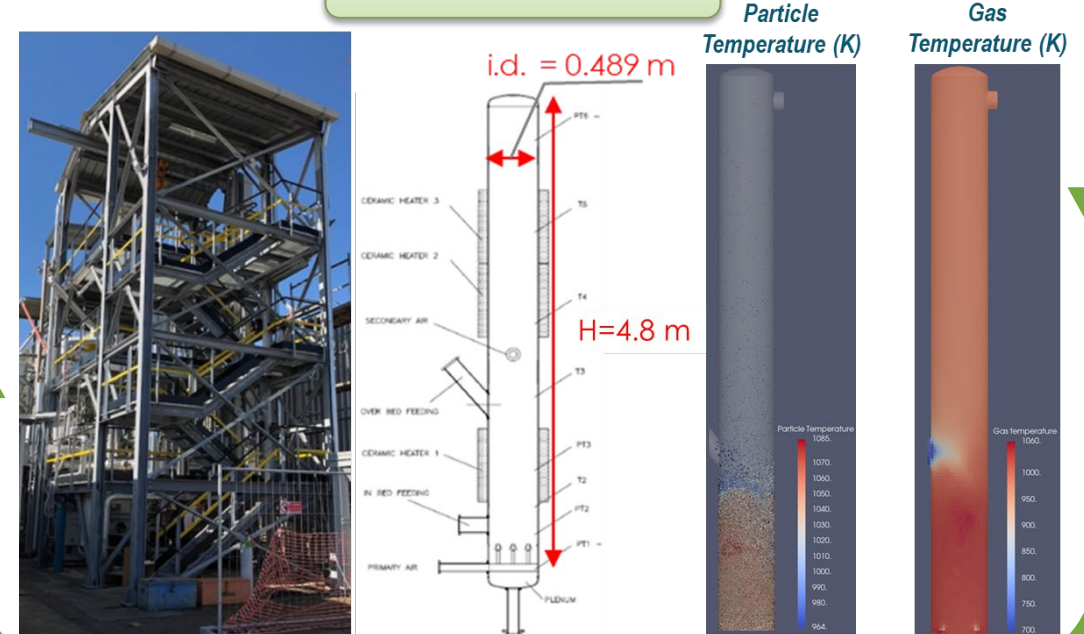
Validation is Critical to Success

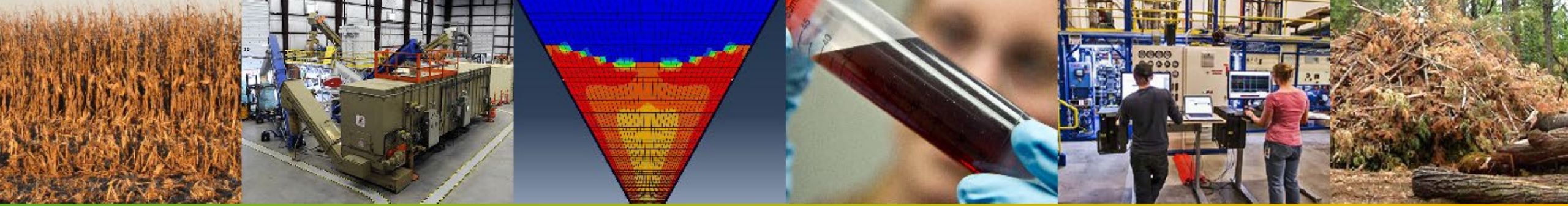
- Our primary goal is to mitigate risks with conversions of highly complex and diverse feedstocks
- Risk mitigation for our approach is ... **VALIDATION AT MULTIPLE SCALES**
- Experimental-modeling coupling strengthens with every iteration

Feedstock Particle Scale



Reactor Scale

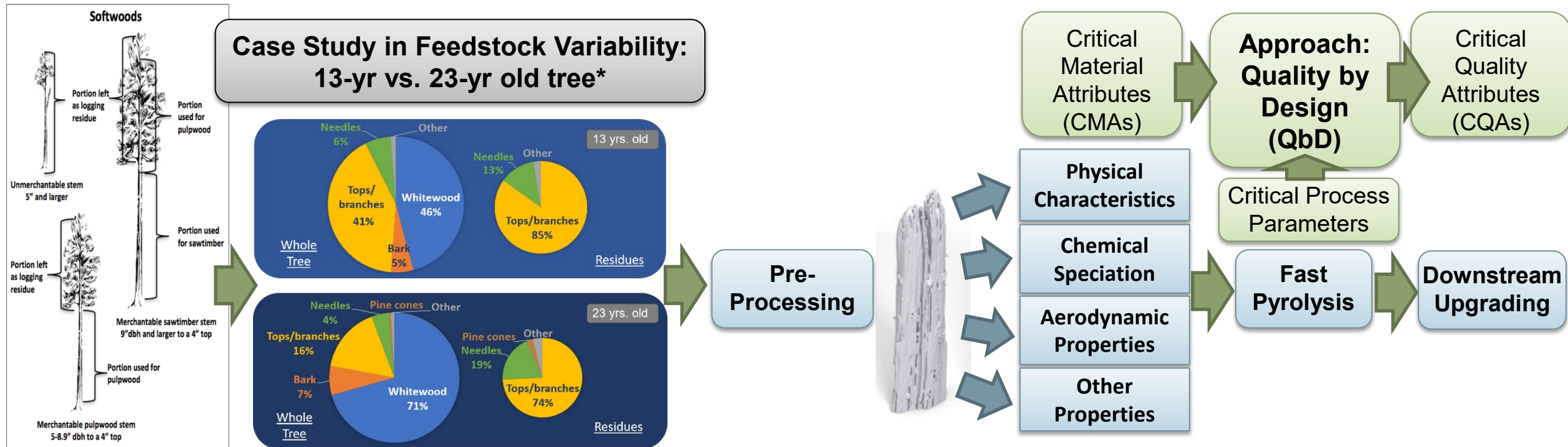




2 – Progress and Outcomes

Fast Pyrolysis

Challenges in Fast Pyrolysis of Biomass



(Bardon and Hazel, 2014)

Challenges toward goal of sustainable low life-cycle C renewable fuels from biomass:

- **Feedstock Variability:** Biomass has inherent variability as function of source, geography, climate, species, etc.
- **Optimal Thermo-Chemical Conversion Efficiency:** Ideally, yield of fast pyrolysis oil is high & energy input is low
- **Lowest Costs:** “Waste” or “scrap” feedstock lowest cost (but often highest variability); reactors & processes must be robust to variable feedstocks to operate most cost effectively (and with maximum up time)

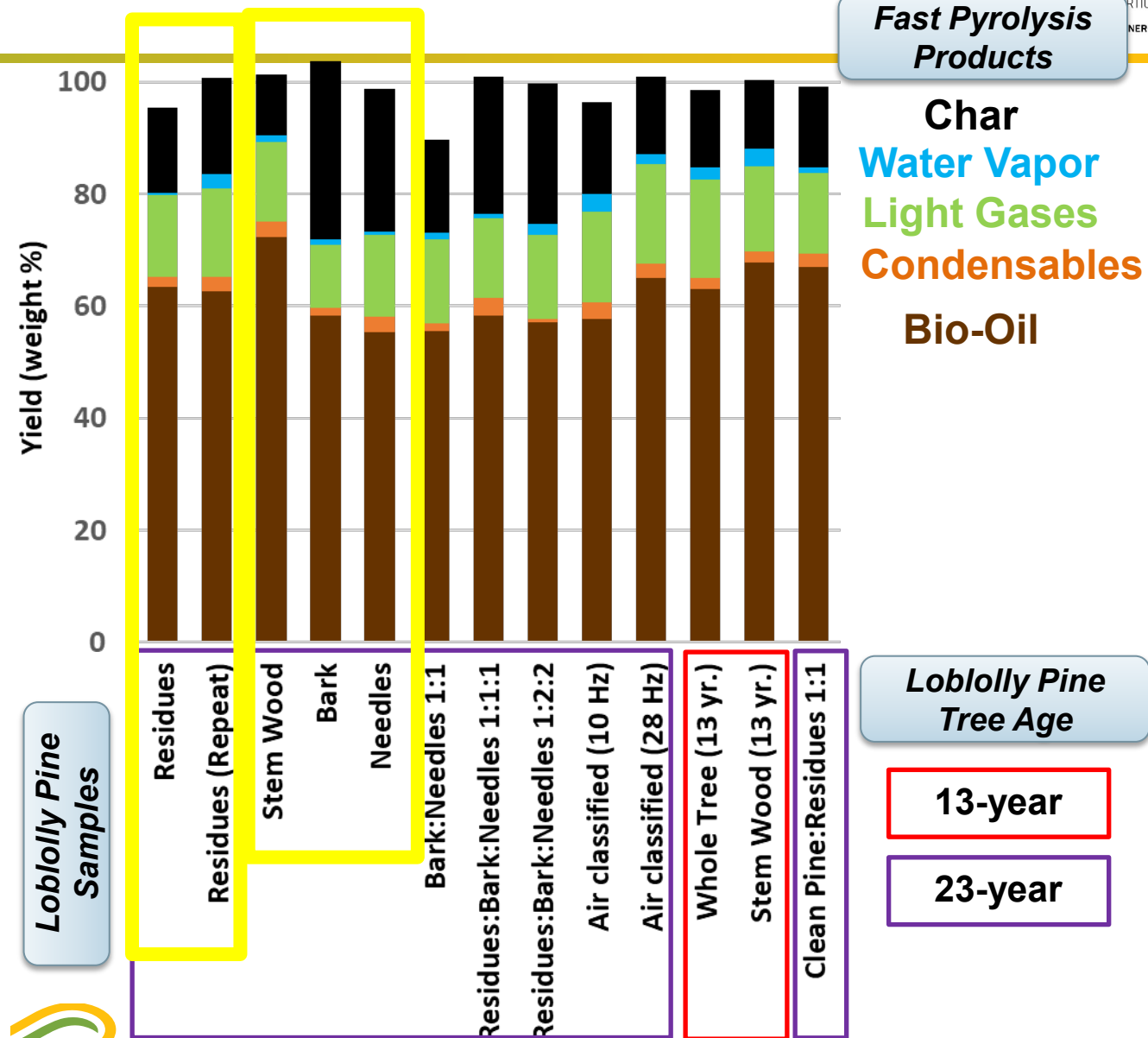


Product Mass Yields from Fast Pyrolysis Experiments

Char
Water Vapor
Light Gases
Condensables
Bio-Oil

Fast Pyrolysis of Loblolly Pine Forest Residues
in 2" Fluidized Bed Reactor (2FBR) at NREL
23-year-old and 13-year-old trees

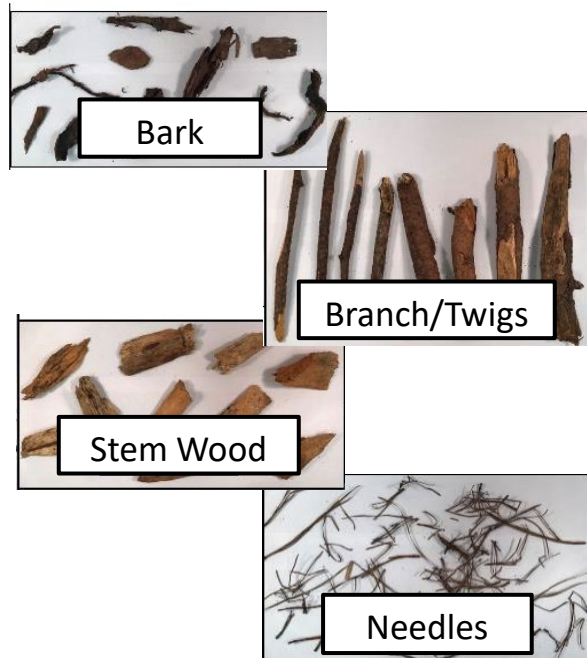
Anatomical Fractions of Forest Residues



Note: **bio-oil** measured gravimetrically; **condensable** products measured by GC; **water vapor** as measured by a dew point analyzer; **char** collected by cyclone and hot filter.

Critical Material Attributes (CMAs) of Forest Residues

Anatomical Fractions of Forest Residues



Feedstock Particle



Characteristics (CMAs)

Physical Characteristics

Particle shape/size, density, structure, porosity

Aerodynamic Properties

Density and aerodynamic properties (fluidization)

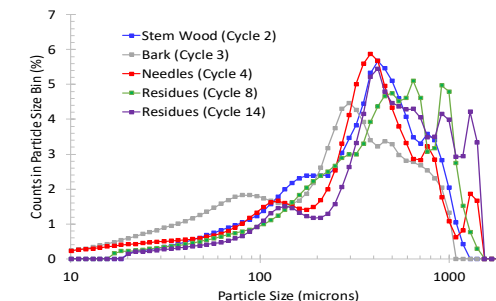
Chemical Speciation

Lignin, hemicellulose, cellulose, moisture, ash, etc.

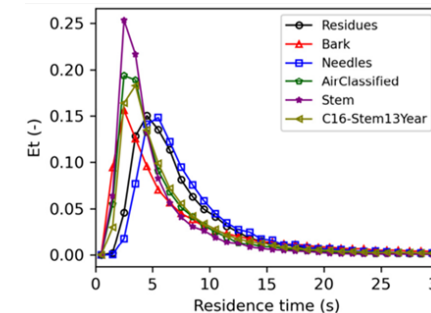
Other Properties

Surface properties (stickiness), attrition susceptibility

Particle Size Distributions



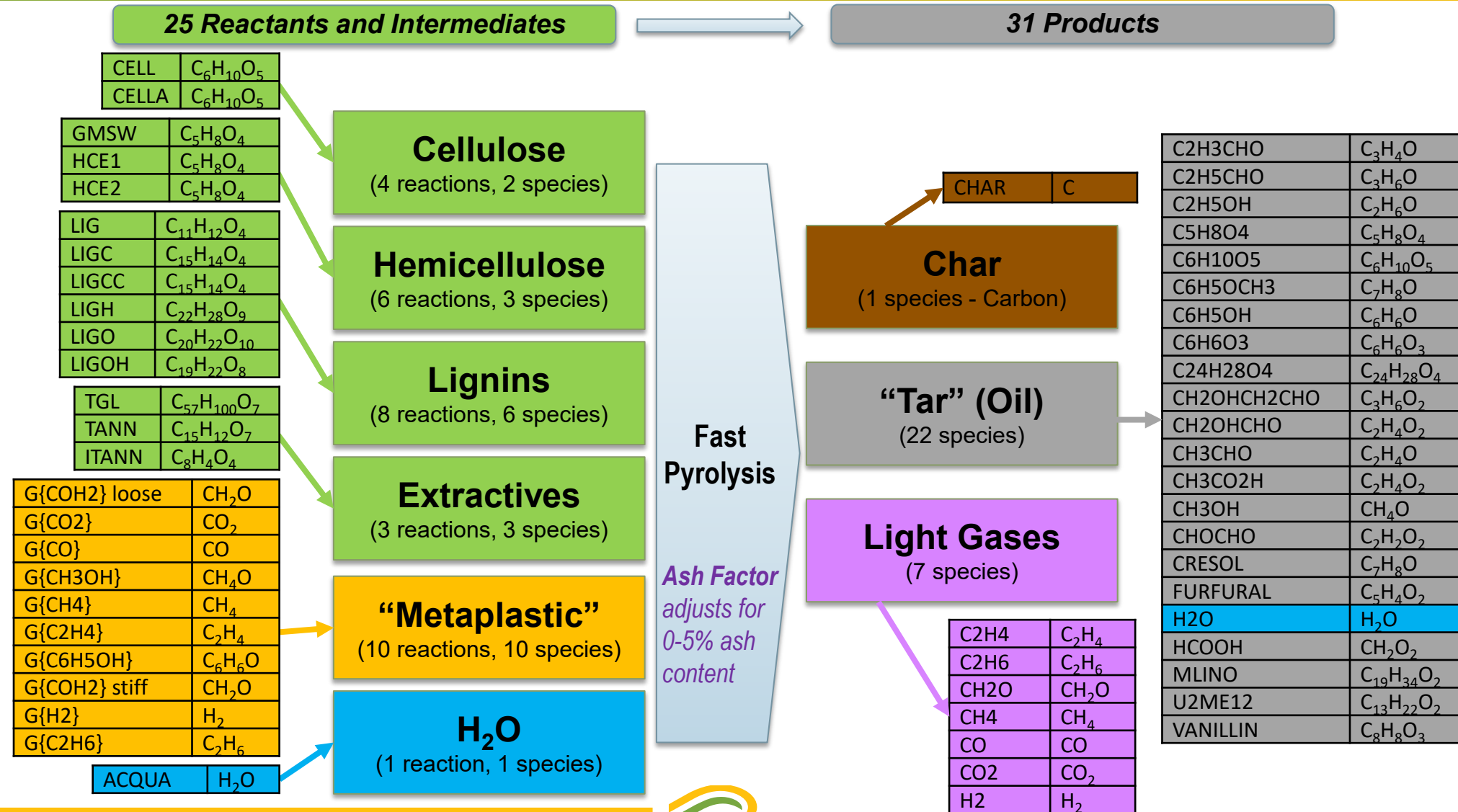
Residence Time Distributions



Debiagi et al. Kinetics
(+ a lot of analysis)



Complex Chemistry Necessary: Model Based on Kinetics by Debiagi et al.*



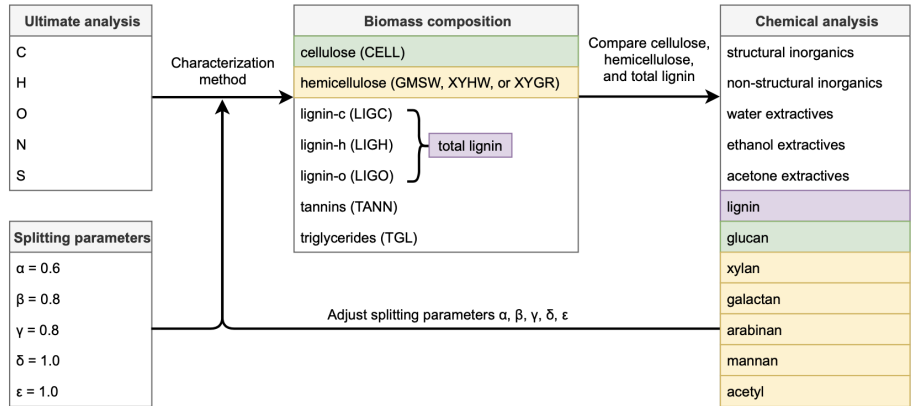
*Paulo Debiagi, et al., "A predictive model of biochar formation and characterization."

Journal of Analytical and Applied Pyrolysis, vol. 134, pp. 326-335, 2018.

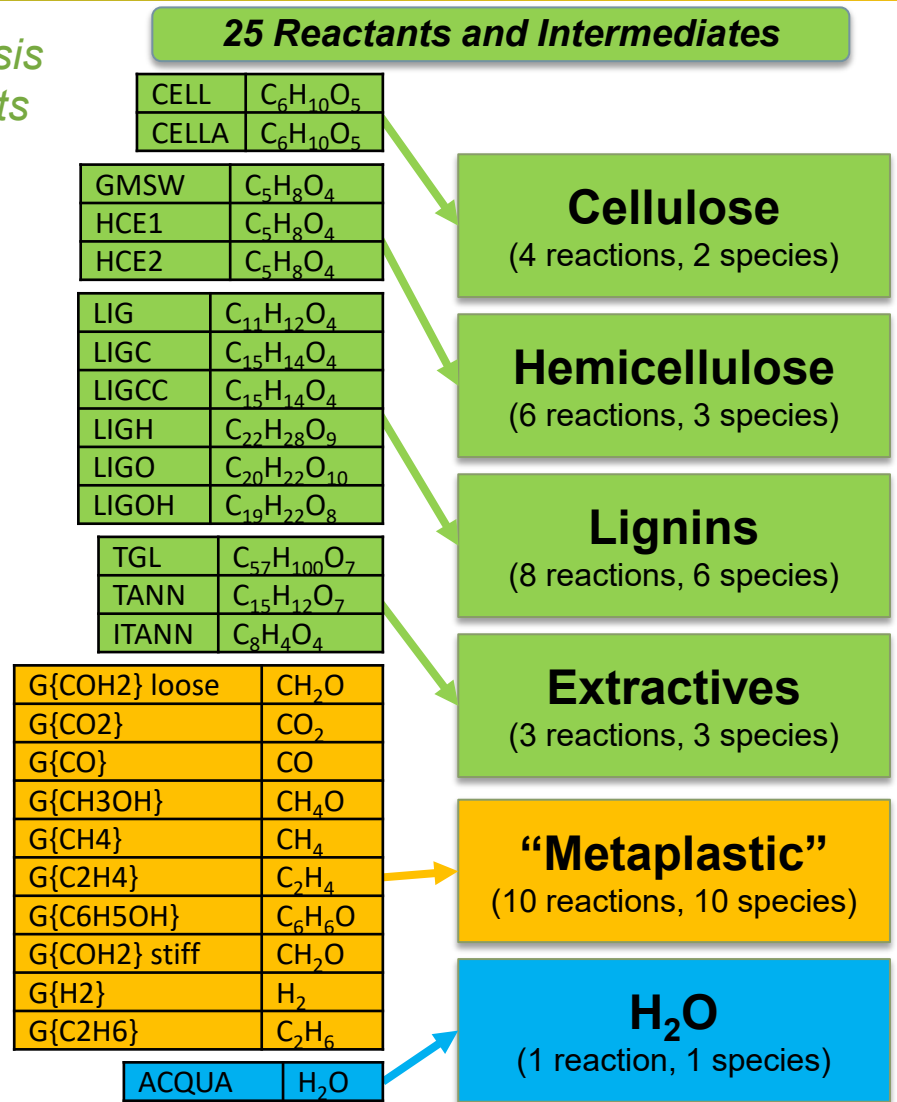
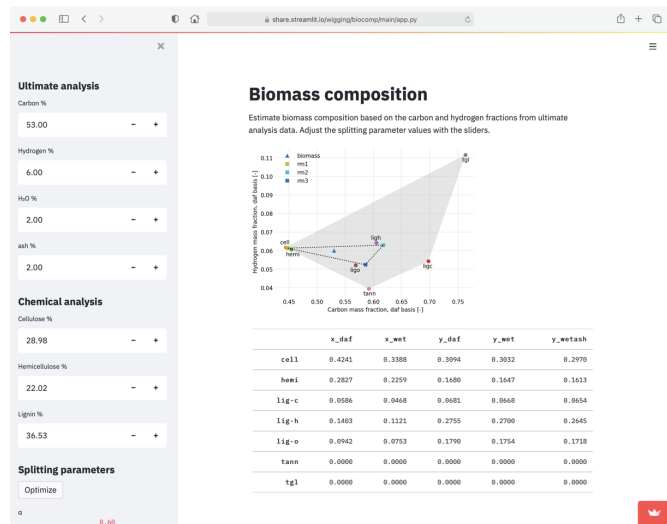
*Also see CRECK Modeling Group at Politecnico di Milano (creckmodeling.chem.polimi.it)

Methodology Developed to Link Biomass Analyses to Debiagi Reactants: LIG-C vs. LIG-H vs. LIG-O Critical

Experimental biomass composition from ultimate and chemical analysis data utilized to determine critical apportionment into Debiagi reactants



An online tool was developed to determine the Debiagi reactants for biomass from ultimate and chemical analysis data.

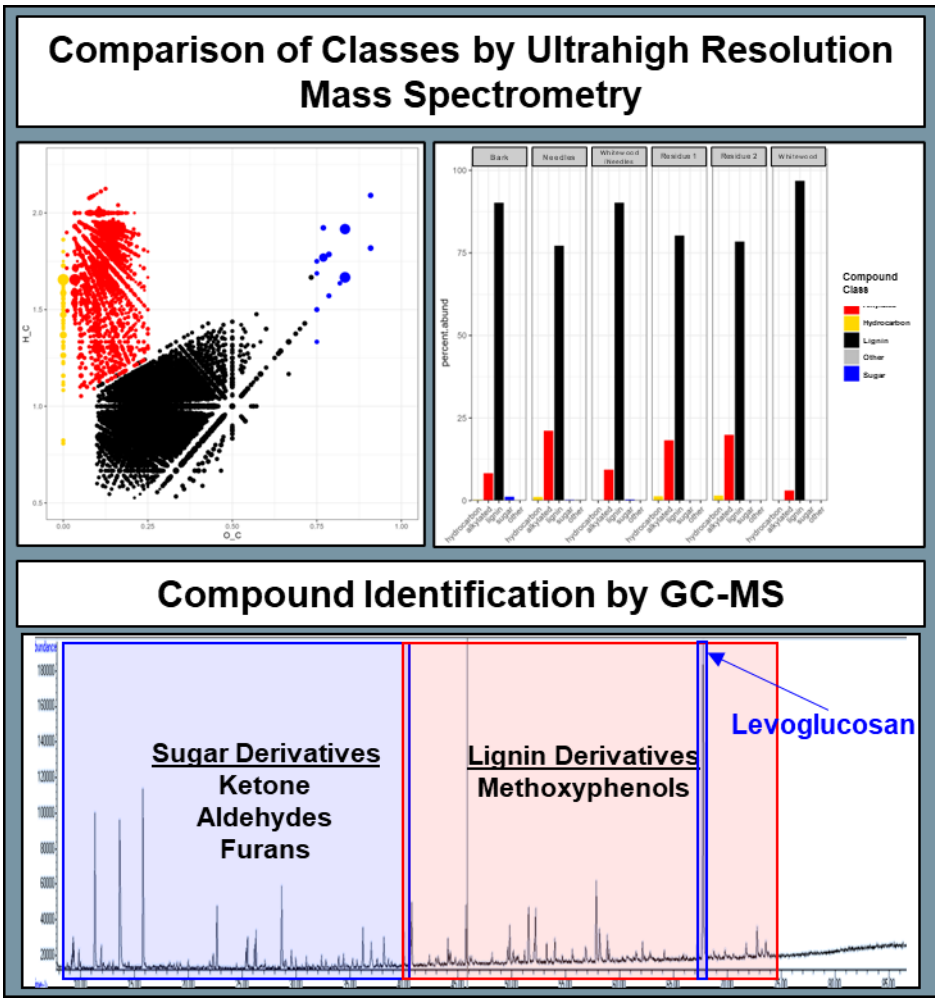
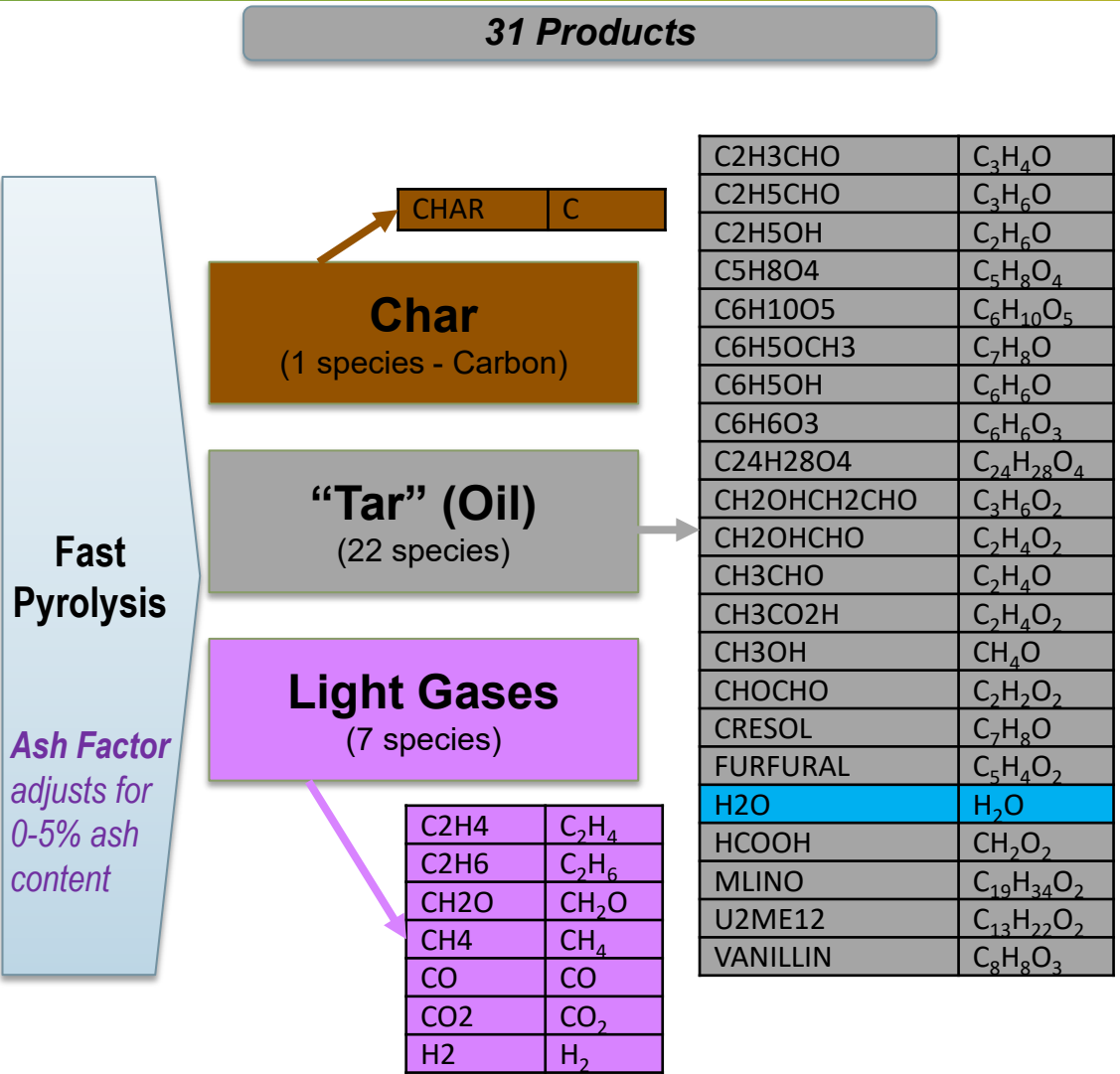


Fast Pyrolysis

Ash Factor adjusts for 0-5% ash content

*Reference: Gavin Wiggins. BioComp: A web tool for estimating biomass composition. Version 22.02. Available at <https://github.com/wigging/biocomp>

Comparison of Model Predicted Oil Chemistry to Experimental Oil Analysis is Challenging – Efforts Ongoing



Critical Quality Attributes (CQAs)

Acidity
Stability



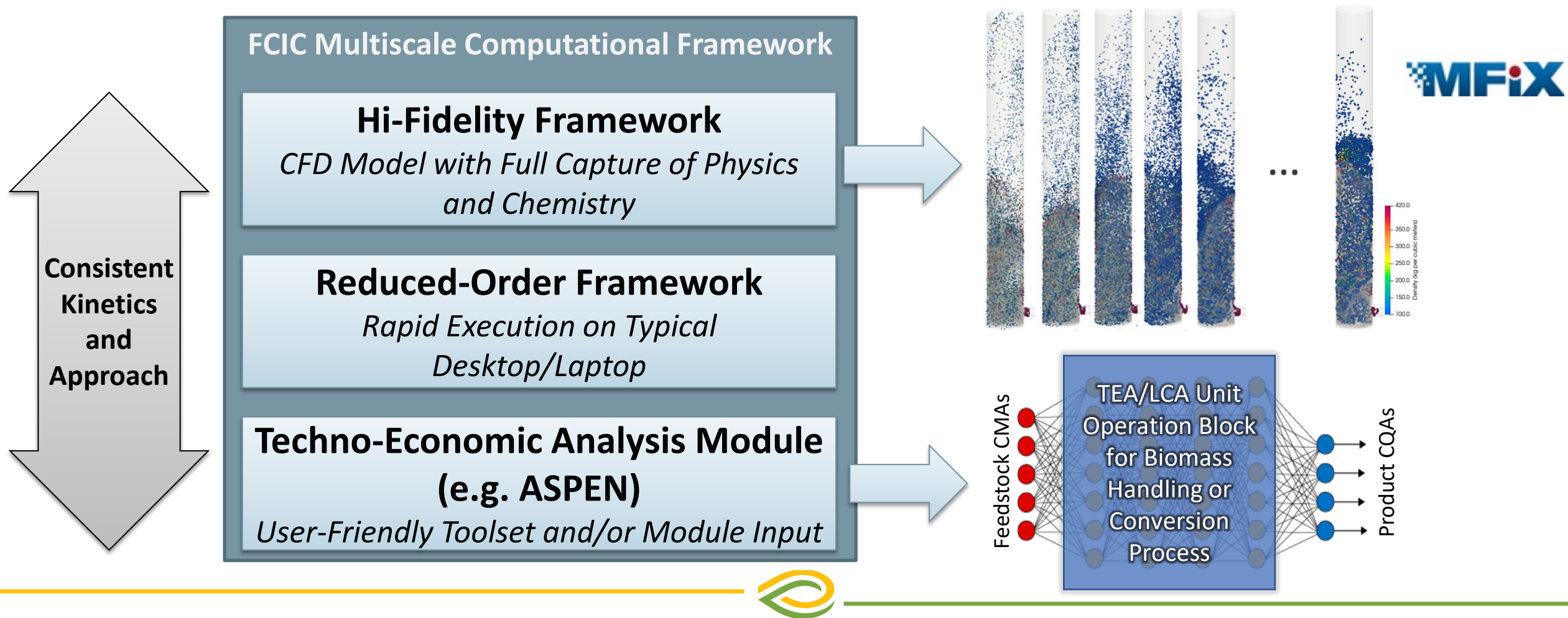
O Content
C Number



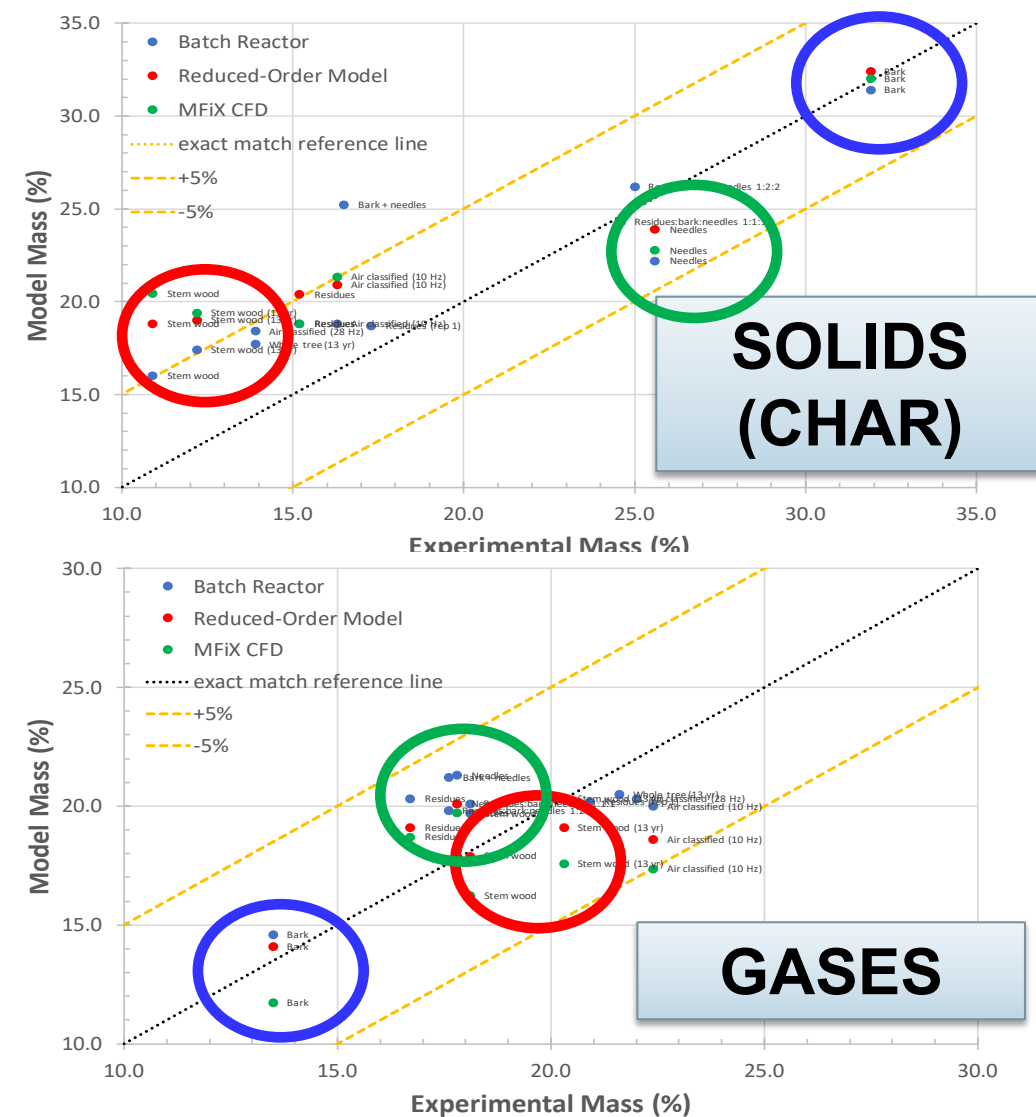
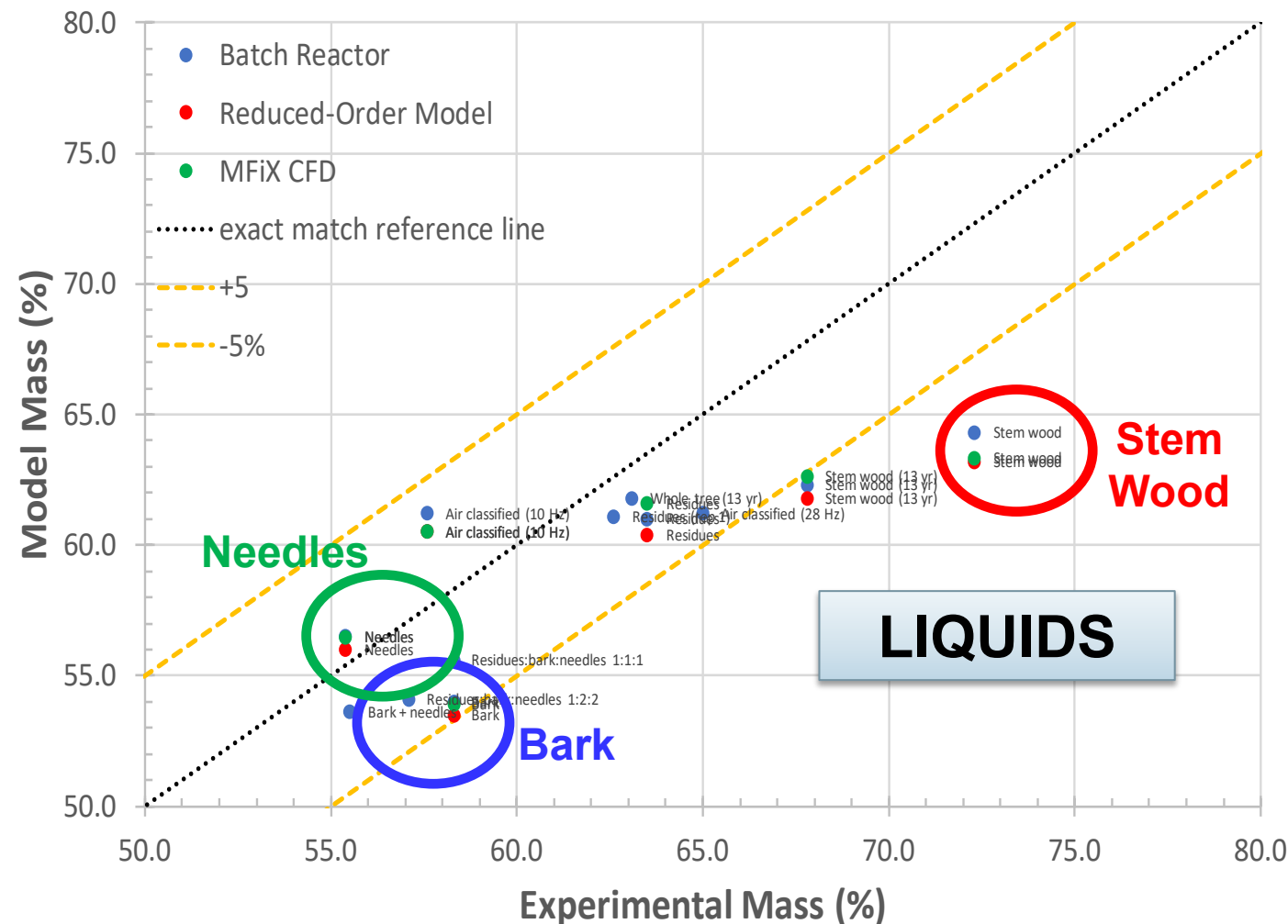
Outcome: Validated Multi-Scale Framework

Includes Three Levels of Complexity & Capability for Range of Users

A validated, multiscale experimental & computational framework that allows biorefinery design engineers & operators to optimize productivity & control critical product quality attributes with variable incoming feedstock attributes.



Validation Results Show Generally Good Agreement and Utility for Model Predictions of Complex Biomass Feedstocks



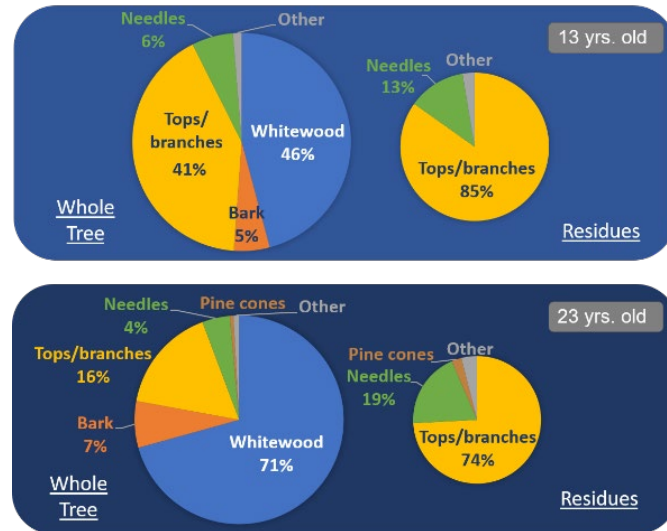
Note: gases include light gases as well as condensables and water vapor which were not included in the experimentally reported oil yield mass.



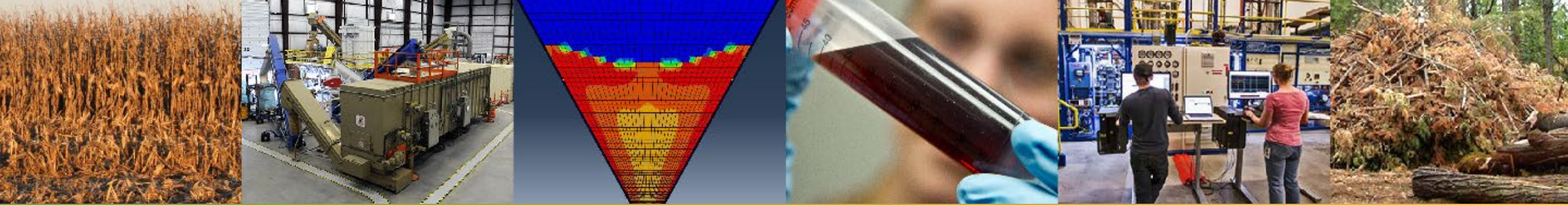
Outcome: Utility for Techno-Economic Analysis

Techno-Economic Analysis results for the conversion of 13-year-old whole thinnings, 23-year-old residues, and combined thinnings + residues.

Case Study in Feedstock Variability: 13-yr vs. 23-yr old tree*



	Thinnings	Residues	Thinnings + Residues
Feedstock supply cost (\$/MT)	\$105.59	\$117.85	\$96.84
Feedstock preprocessing cost (\$/MT)	\$26.90	\$28.54	\$27.72
Delivered feedstock cost (\$/MT)	\$132.49	\$146.39	\$124.56
Biorefinery Fuel C Yield	26.4%	25.3%	25.9%
MFSP (\$/GGE)	\$5.23	\$5.43	\$5.08

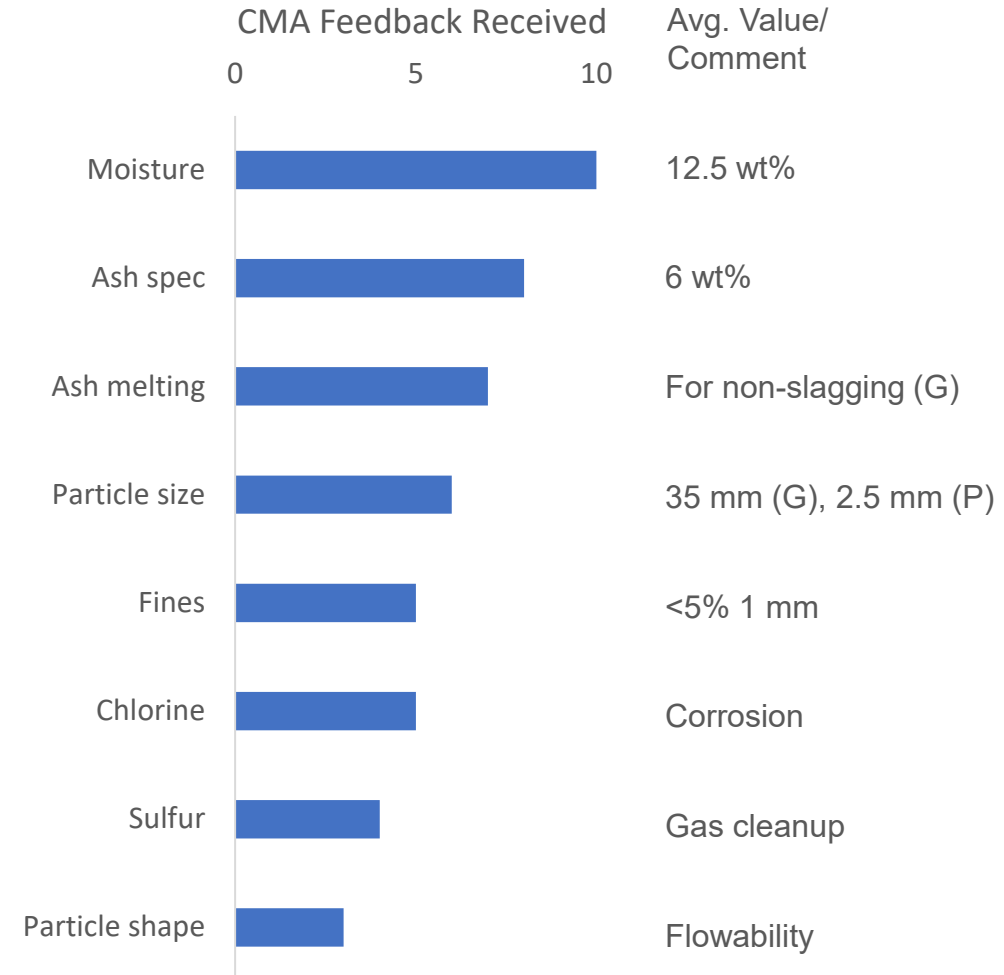
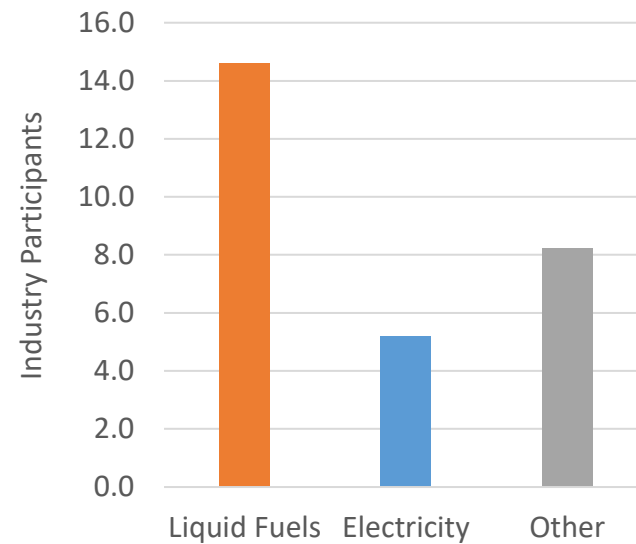
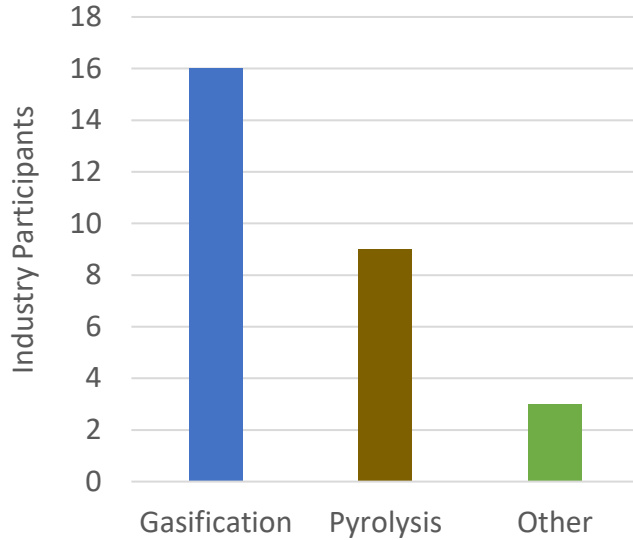


2 – Progress and Outcomes

Gasification

Industry Input from 28 Companies Collected via Survey to Guide R&D

- 28 Industry technology providers provided feedback. They included gasification (G), pyrolysis (P), and other conversion technologies.
- The final products considered are liquid fuels, electricity, and other products (biochar, chemicals, gases).
- Feedback on CMAs was received and summarized.



Gasification Capabilities Building with Multi-Scale Experimental and Modeling Approach Continuing

Fast Pyrolysis vs. Gasification: New Challenges

Fast Pyrolysis of Forest Residues

- Complex size and shaped particles
- Chemistry varies
- Particle shrinks to char
- Particle maintains structure
- Aerodynamics (fluidization) varies
- End product goal: oil
- C objective: maximize oil, minimize gases

Gasification of MSW

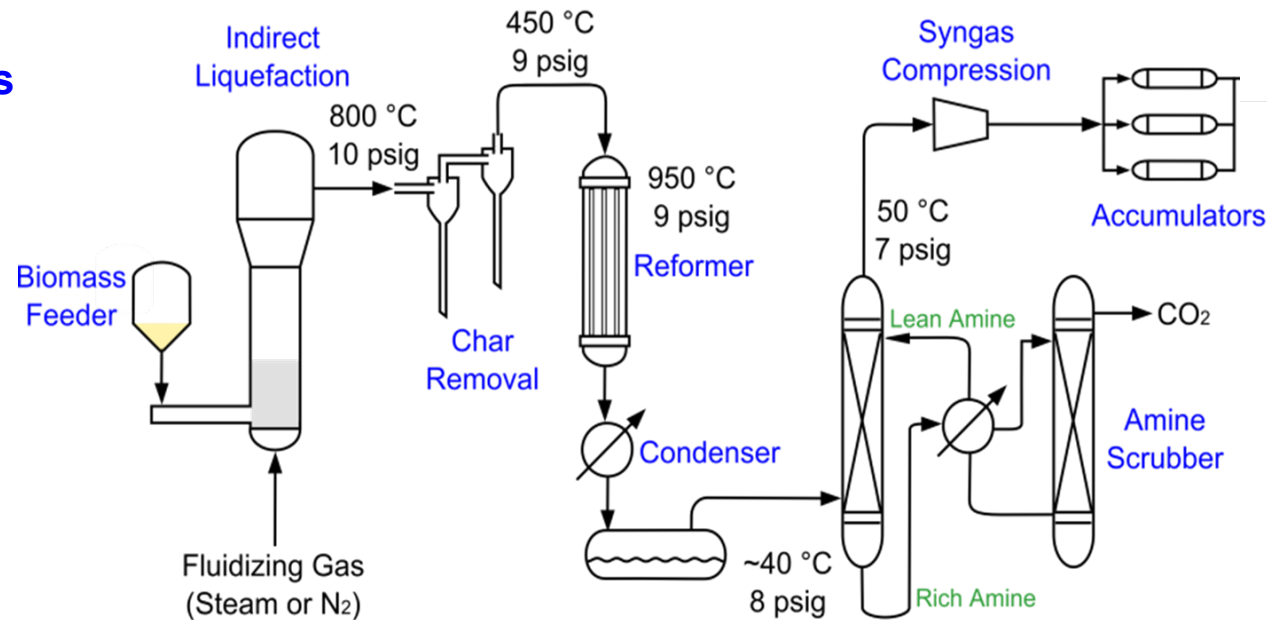
- Complex size and shaped particles
- Chemistry varies drastically
- Particles are consumed
- Particle morphology changes
- Aerodynamics (fluidization) varies
- End product goal: syngas
- C objective: maximize H₂ (#1), CO (#2), minimize CO₂ & tar

MSW Feedstocks

Plastic-Rich

As-received

Paper-Rich



NREL Research Gasifier



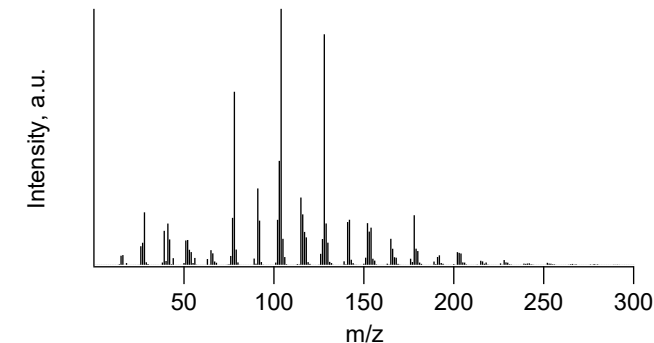
New Micro- and Macro-Scale Instruments Enable High-Throughput Studies of Individual Particles

Micro-Scale Reactor

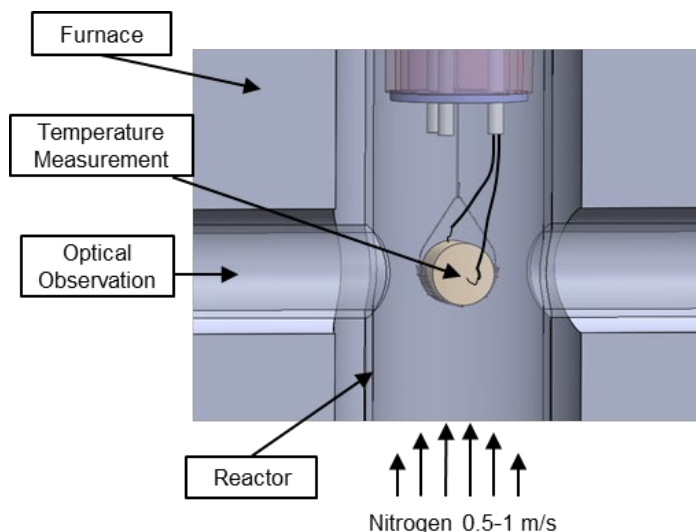
Plastic-Rich
Plastic Components
As-received
Paper Components
Paper-Rich
Mixtures



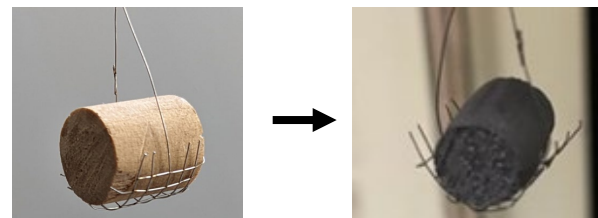
Particle mass: 10-30 mg
Temperatures up to 1000°C
Real-time online mass spectral analysis



Macro-Scale Thermo-Gravimetric Analyzer (TGA)



Particle mass up to 2 g (resolution +/- 1 mg)
Temperatures up to 800°C
Heating rates of 50°C/sec.
Real-time online mass spectral analysis

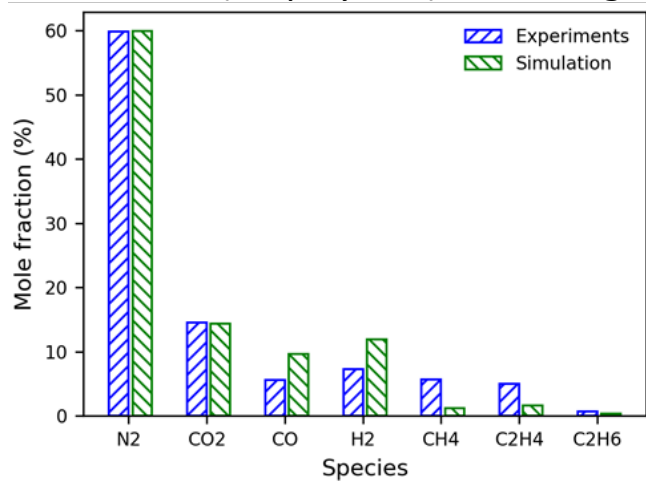


Reactor-Scale Computational Fluid Dynamics Model Developed for Gasification of Biomass & Plastic Feedstocks

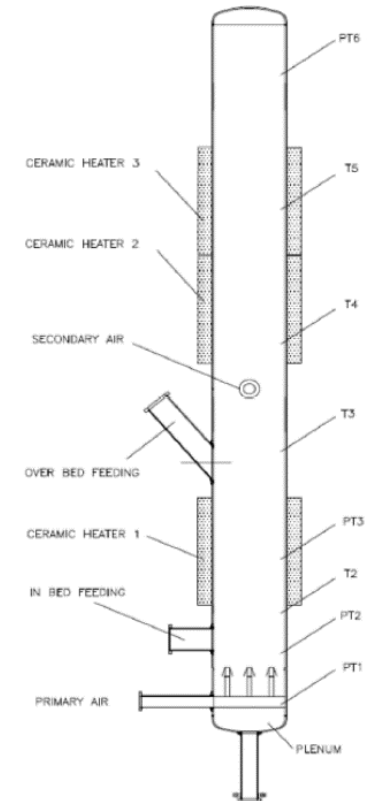
- A computational fluid dynamics (CFD) model of a gasification reactor predicts conversion to gas products for biomass and plastic feedstocks; the model has been validated with experimental results from a pilot scale reactor.
- The model has been validated with data from the Fluidized Air Blown Experimental Gasifier Reactor (FABER) in collaboration with Sotacarbo SpA - Sustainable Energy Research Centre in Italy

Validation of Co-Gasification of:

- Biomass (*Eucalyptus*) @24.9 kg/hr
- Plastic (Blupolymer) @ 34.9 kg/hr



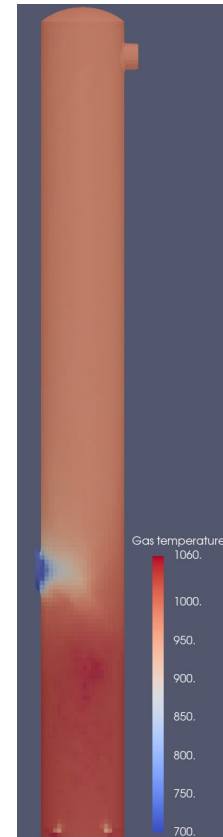
Photo, Schematic, and MFiX CFD Model of FABER Gasification Reactor



Particle
Temperature (K)

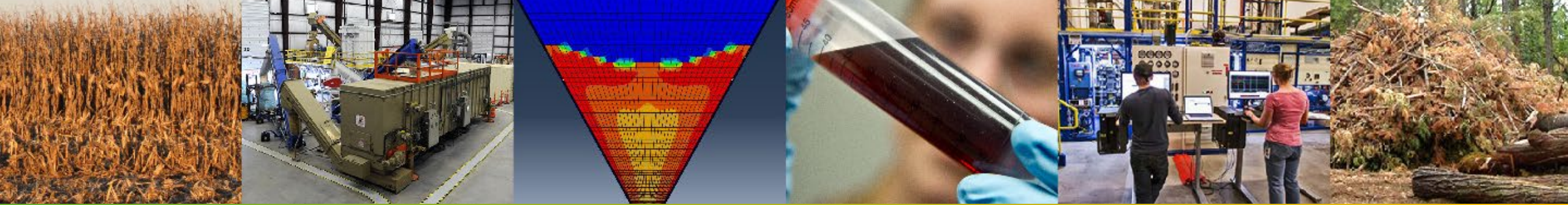


Gas
Temperature (K)



MFiX
mfix.netl.doe.gov





3 – *Impact*

Fast Pyrolysis

- *Comprehensive multiscale experimental & computational framework validated with forest residues*
 - *Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) code (MFiX)*
 - *Reduced-order code*
 - *On-line (GitHub) tool for translating feedstock analysis to reactant inputs*
 - *Techno-Economic Analysis (TEA) level code*
 - *Detailed bio-oil chemistry products*
- *Tech Transfer of framework ongoing: 23 publications and 5 presentations including:*
 - *TCBiomass, Denver, CO, April 19-21, 2022*
 - *American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ, Nov. 13-18, 2022*
 - *16th International Biomass Conference & Expo, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 28-March 2, 2023*
 - *BETO Webinar: “Cost-Effectively Optimize and Scale Bioenergy Technologies with the Consortium for Computational Physics and Chemistry”, October 20, 2022*
[available to watch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lpMGfcAi8U]
- *Industry stakeholders engaged on tech transfer of toolsets*

Gasification

- *Reactor-scale validation of gasification of plastic-biomass mixtures shows promise for capabilities to model complex low-cost feedstocks*



Summary: High Temperature Conversion

Objective: Provide a fundamental science-based understanding of the high-temperature conversion of low-cost, complex mixtures of biomass and waste feedstocks for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and related co-products

Approach: Quality by Design (QbD), Multi-Scale Model-Experiment Coupling, Industry Input-Output

Fast Pyrolysis

- **Outcomes**

- A validated, multiscale experimental & computational framework for fast pyrolysis of forest residues feedstock blends
- *Complex chemistry enabled via Debiagi kinetics and associated translational toolsets*

- **Impact**

- Demonstrated utility in range of models: techno-economic analysis modules to full reactor computational fluid dynamic models

Gasification

- **Progress**

- Industry survey guiding R&D direction
- New tools enable high-throughput studies of conversion at micro- and macro-scales for validation at particle scales
- Recommissioning of national lab-based gasifier for experiments in process

- **Impact**

- Initial reactor-scale model validated with Sotacarbo shows promise for accounting for complex feedstock blends



Quad Chart Overview

Timeline (current AOP cycle)

- October 1, 2021
- September 30, 2024

	FY22 Costed	Total Award
DOE Funding	~\$1,750k	\$1,750k/yr across 6 NLs in Task 6
Project Cost Share *	NA	NA

TRL at Project Start: 3

TRL at Project End: 5

Project Goal

Provide a fundamental science-based understanding of the high-temperature conversion of low-cost, complex mixtures of biomass and waste feedstocks for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and related co-products

End of Project Milestone

- (1) *Validated, high-throughput conversion screening pipeline covering broad conversion options;*
- (2) *Critical Quality Attributes (CQAs) and ranges for Catalytic Fast Pyrolysis (CFP) and gasification intermediates from forest residues and MSW, respectively, related to Critical Material Attributes (CMAs) for co-processing and fuel synthesis;*
- (3) *Validated, multi-scale computational framework to predict intermediate yields and chemistry for CFP and gasification vs. feedstock and air-to-fuel ratio.*

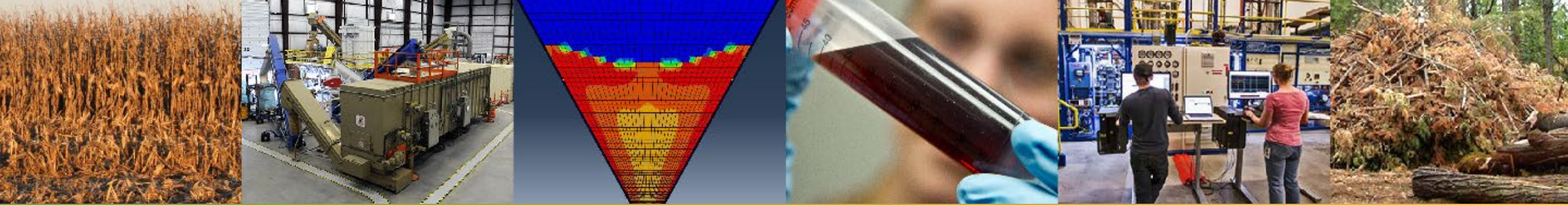
Funding Mechanism

2021 Lab Call – FCIC Merit Review

Project Partners

- 28 Industry partners participated in survey
- Debiagi/CRECK Group
- Sustainable Energy Research Centre (Italy)





Additional Slides

- **Feedback from FY21 BETO Peer Review:**
 - The primary feedback from the FY21 BETO Peer Review was to include gasification as a pathway for thermochemical conversion.
- **Response:**
 - Per feedback, Task 6 added gasification as a pathway.



1. Lu, L. Q. G., X.; Dietiker, J. F.; Shahnam, M.; Rogers, W. A. "MFiX based multi-scale CFD simulations of biomass fast pyrolysis: A review," *Chemical Engineering Science* Vol. 248, 2022, p. 26.
2. Lu, L. Q. L., C.; Rowan, S.; Hughes, B.; Gao, X.; Shahnam, M.; Rogers, W. A. "Experiment and computational fluid dynamics investigation of biochar elutriation in fluidized bed," *AIChE Journal* Vol. 68, No. 2, 2022, p. 11.
3. Lu, L. Brennan Pecha, M.; Wiggins, Gavin M.; Xu, Yupeng; Gao, Xi; Hughes, Bryan; Shahnam, Mehrdad; Rogers, William A.; Carpenter, Daniel; Parks, James E. "Multiscale CFD simulation of biomass fast pyrolysis with a machine learning derived intra-particle model and detailed pyrolysis kinetics," *Chemical Engineering Journal* Vol. 431, 2022, p. 133853.
4. Gao, X. Y., J.; Portal, R. J. F.; Dietiker, J. F.; Shahnam, M.; Rogers, W. A. "Development and validation of SuperDEM for non-spherical particulate systems using a superquadric particle method," *Particuology* Vol. 61, 2022, pp. 74-90.
5. Xu, Y.; Shahnam, M.; Rogers, W. A. CFD Simulation of Biomass Pyrolysis Vapor Upgrading over a Pt/TiO₂ Catalyst in Fixed and Moving Beds; DOE.NETL-2022.3734; NETL Technical Report Series; U.S. Department of Energy, National Energy Technology Laboratory: Morgantown, WV, 2022; p 40. <https://edx.netl.doe.gov/dataset/cfd-simulation-of-biomass-pyrolysis-vapor-upgrading-over-a-pt-tio2-catalyst-in-fixed-and-moving-beds>.
6. Li, C, Gao, X, Rowan, SL, Hughes, B, Rogers, WA. Measuring binary fluidization of nonspherical and spherical particles using machine learning aided image processing. *AIChE J.* 2022; 68(7):e17693.
7. Cheng Li, Rupendranath Panday, Xi Gao, Jiarong Hong, William A. Rogers, Measuring particle dynamics in a fluidized bed using digital in-line holography, *Chemical Engineering Journal*, Volume 405, 1 February 2021, 126824, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cej.2020.126824>
8. Lu, L. G., Xi; Gel, Aytekin; Wiggins, Gavin M.; Crowley, Meagan; Pecha, Brennan; Shahnam, Mehrdad; Rogers, William A.; Parks, James; Ciesielski, Peter N. "Investigating biomass composition and size effects on fast pyrolysis using global sensitivity analysis and CFD simulations," *Chemical Engineering Journal* Vol. 421, 2021, p. 127789.
9. Gao, X. Y., Jia; Lu, Liqiang; Li, Cheng; Rogers, William A. "Development and validation of SuperDEM-CFD coupled model for simulating non-spherical particles hydrodynamics in fluidized beds," *Chemical Engineering Journal* Vol. 420, 2021, p. 127654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cej.2020.127654>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1385894720337761>)
10. Gao, X. Y., J.; Lu, L. Q.; Rogers, W. A. "Coupling particle scale model and SuperDEM-CFD for multiscale simulation of biomass pyrolysis in a packed bed pyrolyzer," *AIChE Journal* Vol. 67, No. 4, 2021, p. 15. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aic.17139>.
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The High-Temperature Conversion Task (Task 6) of the Feedstock-Conversion Interface Consortium (FCIC) addresses challenges with thermochemical conversion of diverse feedstocks. Conversion unit operations include fast pyrolysis and gasification. Feedstocks range from complex mixtures of woody biomass (forest residues) to municipal solid waste (MSW). The research identifies and quantifies the feedstock Critical Material Attributes (CMAs) and product Critical Quality Attributes (CMAs) consistent with the FCIC's overarching approach embracing the Quality by Design methodology. A primary outcome targeted by the research is experimentally-validated computational modeling toolsets that can be utilized by the bioenergy industry to efficiently scale up and operated bioenergy technologies.

